

**#215 “The Significance of the Cross”**  
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The cross is probably the most readily recognized of the Christian symbols, and there is significance to it. As a symbol, the cross is a reminder of the sacrifice of our Savior over two thousand years ago. The cross itself did not effect our salvation, but it was the shedding of blood of the perfect, sinless, spotless Lamb of God on the cross that has made it so that our sins could be forgiven. Thus, the emphasis must always be on the sacrifice of Christ, the ultimate event of significance, not on the cross itself. Yet there is a reason why God chose to have His Son put to death on a tree rather than by some other means.

God is in the details, and He works all things according to a divine master plan, His Son's death by crucifixion being no accident or mere coincidence. In Genesis 3:17, the earth, the man, and the woman are cursed because they ate of the forbidden fruit of a tree. In Deuteronomy 21:22-23, we read, “If a man has committed a sin worthy of death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his corpse shall not hang all night on the tree, but you shall surely bury him on the same day (for he who is hanged is accursed of God), so that you do not defile your land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.” In the Law, God ordained that a curse is brought upon a person if he is hung upon a tree, and hangings on trees were only for those who committed sins worthy of the death penalty. In the New Testament, we learn that all have sinned and fall short of God's glory (Romans 3:23). Furthermore, those who sin are deserving of eternal death, for the wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23). So, in God's eyes, because of the first sin in Genesis and our certain failing to keep the entirety of the Law of God (Galatians 3:10), we have all committed sin deserving of the death penalty. We are all cursed, deserving death, but God had a remedy. Galatians 3:13 says, “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us--for it is written, ‘CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE.’” The apostle Paul quotes from Deuteronomy explaining that Christ Himself bore the curse which was ours to bear. Man deserves to die because he doesn't measure up to God's holy commandments, yet Christ bore upon Himself the curse which should have been ours along with the penalty of death. He was crucified, being nailed to a tree, signifying that He was indeed cursed on our behalf (Acts 5:30). This is the significance of the cross, that our curse could be exchanged for an eternal blessing because Christ bore our curse by being hung on a tree.

We can rejoice that we can lay aside the curse of eternal condemnation in the lake of fire (Revelation 20:15) because we have a Savior who shed His blood and bore the curse of our sin on the cross. The great news is that He didn't die eternally because He was God, and God raised Him from the dead. So, too, by the power of God through a relationship with Christ, we can have eternal life forever with God in heaven. We can be forgiven of our sin and freed from the curse because of the sacrifice of Christ on our behalf if we repent of our sins and turn to Him as Savior and Lord. Where there was cursing, now there can be blessing (Ephesians 1:3), all thanks to Jesus Christ. May He Who bore our curse on the cross receive all glory and praise.